

THE GENOCIDE OF THE EASTERN

CHRISTIANS OF THE CITY OF

SMYRNA IN 1922

RESEARCHED AND DOCUMENTED

AS NEVER BEFORE,

BY PROFESSOR M. H. DOBKIN

The outstanding study, *SMYRNA 1922: The Destruction of a City*, authored by Professor Marjorie Housepian Dobkin, published by Newmark Press, NY, NY, USA, in 1998, is available in bookshops as well as online at

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SMYRNA 1922: The Destruction of a City was first published in 1971. Based on a thorough research of historical archives, it provides captivating factual documentation with vivid accounts about the destruction of the City of

Smyrna

, as well as the slaughter and deportation of its Christian inhabitants. Until 1922, Smyrna had been a remarkably prosperous city in Asia Minor and was rightly considered the jewel of the eastern coast of the Mediterranean Sea.

Professor M. H. Dobkin brings to light suppressed and very little known facts about the annihilation and deportation of the Christian citizens of Smyrna, whose roots there went far back thousands of years.

In September 1922, Mustapha Kemal, the revolutionary ruler of Turkey, led his troops into Smyrna (now Izmir),

which at that time was a predominantly Christian city. While a flotilla of twenty-seven Allied warships - including three American destroyers - looked on, the Turks indulged in an orgy of pillage, rape and slaughter; which the Western powers condoned - eager to protect their oil and trade interests in

Turkey

- through their silence and by their refusal to intervene. Turkish forces then set fire to the legendary city and totally destroyed it. A massive cover-up followed, by tacit agreement of the Western Allies, who had defeated

Turkey

and

Germany

during World War I. By 1923,

Smyrna

's demise was all but expunged from historical memory.

At Barnard College of Columbia University, NY , NY , USA , Professor M. H. Dobkin taught the following subjects for over forty years: English literature, Philosophy, Humanities and an advanced seminar in the writing of non fiction. She has authored four books, including *Smyrna 1922* (which has been translated into Greek) as well as innumerable articles, some of which have been cited in books authored by well known Genocide Scholars in the USA and abroad. Reprints of articles from the book *Smyrna 1922* exist in anthologies.

Professor M. H. Dobkin has been awarded an Honorary Degree (Lit. D.) by Wilson College for her book *Smyrna 1922*. She is Member of the American Center of the International Writer's Association PEN, the Author's Guild, the Modern Language Association, the International Association of Genocide Scholars and the Institute on the Study of Genocide.

With the kind permission of Professor M. H. Dobkin and her Publisher and for the benefit of Web readers, the *Introduction* and the closing 21st *Chapter XXI* of the book *SMYRNA 1922* are presented below

These excerpts provide an insight into this very fine scholarly work, that reveals and documents the hidden and silenced historical facts on the destruction of the city of SMYRNA in 1922 and sheds light on the inhumane fate of its Christian inhabitants. Marked-up are some passages of the following excerpts, in order to invite the attention of the reader.

SMYRNA 1922

The Destruction of a City

Marjorie Housepian Dobkin

NEWMARK PRESS, New York, N.Y., USA

INTRODUCTION

It was in the course of a trip eastward through Europe and the Middle East that I first heard controversy about the burning of Smyrna. In Salonika many of the inhabitants were refugees from Smyrna, having escaped, they said, from "the great fire of 1922." They claimed it had been deliberately set by the Turks to drive out the Christian population. Three weeks later, in Izmir, I heard the Turkish version of the Smyrna fire: the Greeks had set fire to the city before abandoning it, after Kemal Ataturk's victory. I resolved to look into the matter upon my return. By this time history had surely reached a verdict that was distilled and encapsulated in the *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

Under *Izmir* , the pertinent passage in the 14th edition of the *Britannica* then on the

library shelves told me that "more than three-fifths of the town was destroyed during the Greek retreat in 1922." Further on, under a section titled "History" I read that "on September 9, 1922, Izmir was reoccupied by the Turks. ... In addition to the war damage further destruction was wrought by an earthquake in 1928." Three Turkish professors at the University of Istanbul had written the entries.

Clearly I would have to look further. Scanning the *New York Times* in microfilm for the days following September 9, I found the following headlines in the lead story on September 15, 1922:

SMYRNA BURNING, 14 AMERICANS MISSING

1,000 MASSACRED AS TURKS FIRE CITY

KEMAL THREATENS MARCH ON CAPITAL

OUR CONSULATE DESTROYED

Fire Starting in Armenian and Greek Quarters is Sweeping City

The headlines on the sixteenth read: **SMYRNA IN RUINS**, and on the seventeenth, still in the lead, **SMYRNA WIPED OUT KILLINGS CONTINUE**.

Columbia University's Butler Library contained two books devoted to the burning of Smyrna in 1922, both written in the years immediately after the fire. One, *The Blight of Asia* by American Consul George Horton, an eyewitness, includes a wealth of detail, although to the contemporary reader the book is somewhat marred by an excessively impassioned tone. The second, *The Great Betrayal* by

Edward Hale Bierstadt, contained evidence from "unbiased sources" which American officials were trying to keep under wraps. According to the foreword by Edward Capps, former minister from the United States to Greece, who noted too: "It is a pity that access to the wealth of material available in the Department of State in Washington ... is still denied to the public." My editor at Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, the late Hiram Haydn, supported the idea of a book on the burning of Smyrna, assuming that the materials referred to by Ambassador Capps were by now available. He agreed that with so many apparent contradictions the story warranted non-fiction treatment.

Nearly two years of reading secondary sources on the historical background preceded my research in the National Archives and the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. It was not a part of my original plan to include the history of Smyrna from its ancient origins, but its legends and history so enriched my own feelings for the city that I could not resist using some of the material as the starting point of my text. The historical background is not only extensive but it is politically complex and little known to general readers. Moreover, the story of the Smyrna fire and its aftermath is replete with irony, perceptible only to readers aware of what went before. For the sake of clarity I settled on a chronological approach—the "seemingly obligatory quick gallop through history," as a critic put it, who seems to have considered the background nonessential—and I continue to envy writers concerned with dramatic events which are set within more widely known historical contexts.

Aware of the importance of finding as many Turkish and pro-Turkish sources as possible, especially as these touch on the two most sensitive areas—the treatment of the Ottoman Armenians in 1915-16 and events in Smyrna and environs in 1922—I made a search for these my first priority after completing my reading of the more remote historical background. In the sixties, there was a noticeable gap in the volume of materials from any point of view on the period between 1908, when the Committee of Union and Progress ("the Young Turks") took power, and 1923, which marked the Treaty of Lausanne and recognition of Kemal Ataturk's Turkish Republic. Yet I did find a number representing a range of pro-Turkish views between those dates. In his *Memoires of a Turkish Statesman* published in English in 1922, Djemal Pasha, third ranking of the Young Turk leaders, attempted to absolve himself of responsibility for the Armenian "exterminations," as they were then called. In our own Barnard College library I was fortunate in having convenient access to all the works of Halide Edib, in English. Edib had been among the very first emancipated Turkish women and was for a time Kemal's chief propagandist. She entered Smyrna with Kemal and was in the city during the fire, about which she says virtually nothing in her writings. She was a friend of Barnard's Dean Virginia Gildersleeve and she taught at Barnard in 1927-28. (Gildersleeve herself had ties in Turkey as a Trustee of the Constantinople Women's College.)

A more substantial source favoring the Turkish view of the Greco-Turkish war appeared with Arnold Toynbee's *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey*, written in 1922. In 1930, Ahmed Emin Yalman in

Turkey and the World War presented

what was at that time the prevailing Turkish view of that country's wartime treatment of Armenians. Volume 5 of Churchill's series

The World Crisis,

also published in 1930, contains pertinent information on the Greco-Turkish war from the standpoint of British diplomacy which, aside from the disposition of Lloyd George, by and large favored the Turks—at the least by failing to support the Greeks. Lord Kinross's definitive biography,

Ataturk

(1965), offers much important detail on the Greco-Turkish war and Ataturk's insurgency (much of it derived from Turkish sources made available to the author) which I found extremely useful. In books by such experts on modern Turkish history as Geoffrey Lewis, Richard Robinson, and others, the Armenians in Turkey during World War I are briefly presented in a chapter summarizing the whole of Ottoman history to the point at which Kemal's Republic takes up the burden of the work. This would be fair enough if the presentations made a clear distinction between cause and effect, between Turkish-Armenians and Russian-Armenians and hence their respective allegiances during the War, and between events 1915-16 in Anatolia, and 1918-20 in Transcaucasia. In these books such distinctions are blurred when not distorted outright, and the disappearance of the minorities is perceived as beneficial to the new Turkish Republic.

Among the abundant archival materials in Washington, D.C. the papers of Admiral Mark L. Bristol in the Library of Congress were invaluable in reconciling the differences—indeed the complete reversal of facts—in reports the admiral received from Smyrna and the reports he sent to the State Department. Unlike the papers of many national figures donated to archives by relatives who have combed them in advance, these were given to the library evidently undisturbed by the admiral's widow. In the Bristol papers I also found an official report submitted by Fire Chief Paul Grescovich of the Smyrna fire brigade. I have accompanied its listing under official published sources in my bibliography with a summary of its contents.

Also in the Bristol papers is a complete transcript of a London trial in 1924. It includes exceptionally revealing verbatim testimony by members of the Smyrna fire brigade and Turkish and pro-Turkish eyewitnesses as well as their opposite numbers.

For the Turkish view I should also mention a useful series of bulletins published between 1920 and 1936 by the French government summarizing articles that appeared in the Turkish press. These are listed in my bibliography, under official published sources, as *Bulletin Periodique de la Presse Turque*.

(Summaries from the Greek press over the same period are also in the Library of Congress.) Finally, a valuable find was a volume of compiled articles, all taking positions favoring Turkey, written by leaders of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, the Near East Relief, the U.S. Chamber of Commerce for the Levant, and members of the U.S. diplomatic corps who came together in a "General Committee for the Ratification of the Lausanne Treaty." Titled

A Treaty With Turkey,

the volume is listed in my bibliography under General Committee as no editor is named.

A stroke of luck early in my search for eyewitnesses led me to Dr. S. Ralph Harlow, who had been a teacher and religious leader at the American missionary college for boys, at Paradise, a suburb virtually next door to Smyrna. In failing health when I found him, Dr. Harlow was as clear-headed as when he had been voted the most exciting professor at Smith College while I was a student there.

Tracking down the American sailors, I found a listing in the Naval Records, of all those placed on shore duty, and then examined the roster rolls of each U.S. ship in Smyrna harbor to find the men's serial numbers— indispensable in obtaining addresses from the Bureau of Naval Personnel of those still alive and receiving pensions. I was able to locate five former seamen who were guarding American installations in Smyrna during the days in question. No officers on the scene were still living.

Greeks constituted the majority population in Smyrna, while the Armenian community as a whole (no more than twenty thousand in all) was singled out for the most brutal treatment, and the fire began in the heart of the Armenian quarter. Because the voices of Armenian victims are more prominent in this story, some readers have assumed, erroneously, that the demise of Smyrna is essentially an Armenian story. The destruction of that once glorious city is actually the penultimate chapter of the Greek tragedy in Asia Minor.

I should stress here that in no instance in this book have I invented dialogue; everything said was quoted, either in an interview or a written record. After taping half a dozen interviews with escapees from the Smyrna fire I could see that while there were many variations in detail, and each story could make up a book in itself, the information

derived about the nature of events did not vary. My sources were able to bring the climactic scenes of this book vividly to the foreground. I was fortunate, too, to find two members of the Jewish community in Smyrna able and willing to share their vivid recollections with me. A more extensive search for oral histories would, I am certain, have made this book substantially longer but not substantially different.

I was at first puzzled by the fact that while most critics considered that I presented the facts objectively, "letting them speak for themselves," in the words of Lord Kinross, to a few the book was "highly charged" or "subjective." In the light of further reflection I find the contradiction understandable. Some readers fail to distinguish between the tone taken by a writer and their own emotional response to material the writer is presenting. A few reviewers have attributed their own emotional responses in just this way, no doubt.

Since this book first came out, at least two full-length studies have been published focusing specifically on Smyrna between 1919 and 1922. In 1973 *Ionian Vision, Greece and Asia Minor 1919-22* by Michael Llewellyn Smith was published by St. Martin's Press. An expansion of the author's doctoral thesis at Oxford, it covers much of the ground that appears here, but with emphasis on British and some Greek sources. The author concludes that Turkish soldiers burned Smyrna. He has, however, taken Bristol's Report of the International Commission on the Greek Landings of May 1919 at face value, and has accepted the admiral's figure of one to two thousand fatalities in the Smyrna fire.

In 1984 Victoria Solomonides completed her doctoral dissertation titled "The Greek Administration of the Vilayet of Aidin 1919-22" for King's College, University of London. Her investigations concern primarily the problems faced by Aristedes Sterghiades, the ranking administrative official during the Greek occupation of Smyrna, in the years preceding the entry of the Turkish forces. Solomonides describes the conditions under which the Greek administration had to operate. For political reasons Greek Prime Minister Venizelos acceded to a complex multinational structure so that in addition to interallied authorities whose duties overlapped with those of the Greek administration and continually impeded its tasks, Greek rule had to contend with the claims of the system prevailing for centuries whereby non-Moslems conducted their own internal affairs, most often under the leadership of their clergy. Among other conditions, it had to contend with the traditional "capitulations" exempting foreign nationals and all those obtaining foreign protection, from paying taxes or submitting to trial in local courts—privileges the foreign powers were unwilling to forgo.

Solomonides' research confirmed my analysis of the prevailing political situation among the Allied powers and their respective positions. Her study points to evidence in the Italian archives supporting contentions of planned connivance by Italian agents in Smyrna in the disorders that accompanied the Greek landings on May 15, 1919. As to the fire itself, and other matters discussed herein, she discovered only supporting evidence in the governmental archives of Great Britain, Italy, and Greece.

A pertinent and valuable scholarly collection, *Deltio Kentrou Mikrasiatikon Spoudon* (*Bulletin of the Center for Asia Minor Studies*), vol. 4, a special issue on the Asia Minor catastrophe (ed. Paschalis Kitromilides, Athens, 1983), offers the fruits of considerable new research on the Greeks of the Ottoman Empire during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The articles appear in English, French, or Greek, and summaries in French or English are provided for articles published in Greek. Among the more relevant articles is one by A. J. Panayotopoulos, in English, based on work for a doctoral dissertation, which describes in considerable detail, as the title indicates, "The Economic Activities of the Anatolian Greeks from the Mid-19th to the Early 20th Centuries," including of course those of the Smyrna region. A fascinating study, "The Crypto-Christians of the Pontus" by Antony Bryer, also in English, includes numerous references to works bearing on the subject of pressures exerted in the Ottoman Empire for conversion to Islam, demographic charts, and British and French documents on the subject of the title. Thanos Veremis has presented "Two Letters—Memoranda from E. Venizelos to Winston Churchill" (the letters appear in their original English) with reference, by Venizelos, to the severity with which the Allies were treating Greece's war debt as contrasted to the indulgence shown to Turkey and Bulgaria, their wartime enemies. A summary, in French, of Yannis Mourellos' paper concerning the Franco-Turkish accord of 1921 reinforces my sense of the serious consequences of this alliance on the fate of the Asia Minor Greeks. An article by Victoria Solomonides derived from research in preparation for her doctoral dissertation centers on an annotated report from Chrysostomos Hajistavrou, the Metropolitan of Ephesus, to the Greek Patriarchate in early October 1922 which, as indicated by the summary in English, includes substantial detail on the last days of Smyrna, the fate of the Christian communities, the arrival of refugees in Greece, and measures taken for their relief. Included in the volume is my own article, "George Horton and Mark L. Bristol, Opposing Forces in U.S. Foreign Policy 1919-1923."

When I was gathering materials for this book, the population figures for minorities in the late Ottoman Empire were available only from minority sources; they were primarily church and mission figures. More recently a number of Turkish and American scholars acceptable to the Turkish government have published works based on Ottoman census figures. These demographic studies show the number of Greeks and Armenians to have been so markedly low—especially during periods of unrest—in contrast to the figures available earlier from Greek and Armenian sources, that demographics has become an

issue of considerable importance in the current, politically heated climate. Because the Turkish archives are open only to scholars selected in advance by the Turkish government, it bears noting that the figures cannot be verified by others at this writing.

The latest *Bulletin* (volume 5, 1984-85) of the Center for Asia Minor Studies includes a study by Paschalis Kitromilides and Alexis Alexandris titled "Ethnic Survival, Nationalism and Forced Migration; the Historical Demography of the Greek Community of Asia Minor at the Close of the Ottoman Era." The paper presents previously unpublished materials from the Greek Foreign Ministry Historical Archives (AYE) and bibliographic references to important works by Turkish, Greek, and other scholars on the sensitive issues of demographics and on linguistic and migratory patterns—primarily of Asia Minor Greeks during the late Ottoman period. From the evidence presented in this important article emerges a new more precise and reliable picture of population magnitudes in Asia Minor in the early twentieth century, as well as a clearer sense of the human losses involved in the protracted tragedy of the period 1912-22.

In "Shared Illusions: Greek-Armenian Cooperation in style="" Asia Minor and the style=""
Caucasus
1919-22," in
*Greece
and
style=""
Great Britain
During World War I*

(ed. The Institute for Balkan Studies, Thessaloniki, 1986, pp. 139-92), J.K. Hassiotis describes relations between the two beleaguered minorities in the last years of the Ottoman Empire and during the struggle for existence of the short-lived Armenian Republic in the Transcaucasus. According to his study, relations were marked more often by a lack of cooperation, largely because the respective predicaments of Greece (and Greeks) and Armenians (and Armenia) were so dire over nearly the whole of the period. Hassiotis sheds further light on "General" Torcom, confirming my interviews with Armenians from Smyrna. Citing Greek and British documents (in addition to an Armenian source), he writes of the opposition of the Armenian community in Smyrna to Torcom's plans and states that their unfavorable reaction "undermined [Torcom's] endeavors to form three regiments of volunteers from Thrace, Constantinople, Bursa and Syria" (175). This is another of the few works in English that makes scholars (through extensive citations) aware of the more recent scholarship on matters pertinent to the period 1919-23 in Turkey.

Evidence both published and unpublished, discovered by Professor Vahakn Dadrian of

the State University of New York at Geneseo, concerns two separate points: the British attitude towards Admiral Bristol and some Turkish attitudes on the burning of Smyrna and destruction of other towns during the Armenian deportations. Comments of ranking British officials in charge of the Eastern Department of the Foreign Office indicate the naiveté and ignorance of Mark Bristol, characterized as a man "carefully spoon fed by the Turks." The characterization applies as well to Mrs. Bristol and Bristol's intelligence officer Lt. A. S. Merrill, who is quoted liberally in my text. Further, in his report of October 18, 1919, Admiral Richard Webb told Lord Curzon, the British secretary of state, that "very few of them [the Americans] have any previous knowledge of the Near East, the Committee of Union and Progress, or of the political history of the past ten years. . . . [They are] ready to rise to such catchwords as independence and self-determination." These references, which I have summarized from Dadrian's notes, support the portrait I have drawn of Admiral Bristol, which I based on interviews with American sailors and others, and for the most part on the admiral's own words. Dadrian's materials are from the Foreign Office Archives in the Public Records Office,

style=""

London

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Dadrian's fluency in Turkish led him to two books published in Turkey that expose the authors' views on the burning of Smyrna. One, published in 1953 and titled *Maresal Fevzi Cakmak* is by Siueeyman Kuelce. In volume 1 (p. 236), the author implicitly concedes that General Nourredin, commander of the army which took over Smyrna on September 9, 1922, was responsible for the massacre and the fire. Kuelce blames the general for his "myopic" outlook. His view is supported by Falih Rifki Atay, author of *Cankaya. Ataturkuen Dogumundan Qeluemuene Kadar* (Chankaya.

From Ataturk's Birth up to his Death),

style=""

Istanbul

: n.p., 1980. Atay writes of the two "lynches"—one in Ismid in July 1922, by which time some of the surviving deportees had returned, and the other involving the Greek Metropolitan of Izmir—and both producing in the author "nothing but revulsion" (p. 324). Quoting from notes he made at the time of the fire, Atay continues:

Why were we burning Izmir? [Izmiri nicin yakiyorduk?] Were we afraid that we would not be delivering ourselves from the [sway] of the minorities in case the mansions, hotels and cafes were left to remain? Driven by the same fear we put to the torch all the inhabitable quarters and neighborhoods of the Anatolian cities and towns during the World War I Armenian deportations. (p. 323)

Atay also emphasizes the bigotry and "penchant for arrogance and cruelty" of Army Commander Nouredin on whom he blames the burning of Smyrna (an act Kemal was evidently unable or unwilling to prevent). Nouredin's actions, according to Atay, were "undoubtedly . . . reinforced by ... the ruins of Turkish villages which the Greeks since their retreat from Afyon had been reducing to ashes" (p. 325).

There is a school of thought that believes one must balance one set of atrocities against another by giving "equal time" or equal emphasis, and one critic reprimanded me for failing to do this. I have taken American Consul George Horton's view of the atrocities committed by Greek troops as they fled towards Smyrna, rather than Arnold J. Toynbee's. The latter did an about-face in *The Western Question*, perhaps because he had expected far better of Greeks than Turks (an elitist view to be sure), but without doubt because he equated all violence, denying qualitative differences in motive. This does not coincide with my conviction that motives and circumstances must be weighed. Consul Horton, in his final report to the secretary of state on the burning of Smyrna, dated September 26, 1922 (which reached me too late for inclusion in the original text of this book), wrote: "I see a difference between the excesses of a furious and betrayed army, retreating through a country which it had held for several years, and without its officers, and the conduct of the victorious Turkish army which, instead of protecting the helpless people which it had in its power, deliberately set about massacring and outraging it" (National Archives 767.68/476).

Toynbee's theory of history, which does not always accommodate particulars, and his infusion of Christian ethics in areas where these do not suit drove him to contradict himself more than once on the question of the Armenian "exterminations." Missing from my text are his later words on the subject. In *Acquaintances* (Oxford University Press, 1967) he unequivocally terms the Ottoman treatment of the Armenians in 1915-16 a *genocide* (240).

After the original edition of this book was published, numbers of Greek escapees approached me, asking that I record their experiences. I did not take up these offers once I had established that the subjects had no new evidence to offer. I did make note of the testimony of Nicolas Tsamapoulos of Astoria, New York, who showed me the words that Vice Consul Maynard Barnes, to whom he had turned for assistance during the days when Smyrna was smouldering, had angrily scrawled across his Certificate of Naturalization: "Resided in country of birth for four years—Citizenship lost." (This, while French officials were handing out

safe-conduct passes to anyone who could speak, even haltingly, in French.) Such a specific example of Barnes's needlessly harsh behavior after Consul Horton's departure, confirms the impression of some of the American seamen that Barnes was excessively anxious to follow Admiral Bristol's policy of giving no aid and comfort to the minorities.

More recently a mutual friend arranged for me to interview Nino Russo of Freeport, Long Island; I was happy to obtain an Italian view. A youthful eighty years old when I spoke with him, Russo had been ship's engineer on the Italian battleship *Vittore Imanuele*, which had sailed into Smyrna harbor just as the fires were beginning to break out at various points in the city. Russo spoke with the same intense feeling as had most of the American seamen I interviewed. The heat at one point was so strong, he confirmed, that even though his large ship stood at considerable distance from the shore, it had to move back. The Italians had come in to pick up their own nationals but they sent out twenty lifeboats and picked up anyone within range without asking who was or was not Italian. "There were so many bodies in the water you couldn't count. Everybody, ... all the big-shots, the Captain, all those people going back and forth to shore, they knew and they reported that the Turks were burning

style=""

Smyrna

. All the crew, we all knew it was the Turks." None of his testimony is new, but it is noteworthy considering that Italian policy strongly and openly supported the Turks. Russo's account also confirms the victims' reports concerning the kindness of Italian ships and corroborated other reports of the intense heat on the waterfront at the height of the fire.

It has recently come to my attention that Mustapha Kemal (Ataturk) himself acknowledged the attempted extermination of Armenians conducted in 1915-16 and summarized in chapter 2 as a part of the historical background of events leading to the sack and burning of Smyrna. In an interview with Swiss journalist Emil Hildebrand published in the *Los Angeles Examiner* of August 1, 1926, Kemal referred to political antagonists as "These left-overs from the former Young Turkey

[sic]

Party, who should have been made to account for the lives of millions of our Christian subjects who were ruthlessly driven en masse from their homes and massacred." Paradoxically, while continuing to revere Kemal as founder of the Turkish Republic and their foremost national hero, successive Turkish governments, including the one currently in power, also continue to revere Talaat, the leader of the Young Turk party and architect of the Armenian genocide. For all practical purposes Kemal himself was in charge during the postwar period that constitutes the primary focus of this book.

Over the past two decades there has been a spate of books in English on the Near or Middle East, many of them enlightening. Revisionism on certain aspects of Turkish history between 1908-23 is another matter. While this is not the place for an extended discussion, mention is necessary because the Turkish government appears to be promoting a cottage industry of works for foreign consumption which the proliferation of Turkish studies in the United States and abroad is in danger of legitimizing, notably among some scholars whose work, for one reason or another, depends on maintaining the goodwill of Turkish officialdom. I have described in my text earlier attempts to manipulate the recording of events for political purposes. (In works published earlier I have devoted somewhat more detail to historical revisionism of events covered in this book. See the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich edition titled *The Smyrna Affair*, pp. 223-25, and the last four pages of my article in

Commentary,

"The Unremembered Genocide," September 1966, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. 55-61.)

At this writing the Turkish government is enlisting academic support here and abroad in a massive campaign to change the historical record for the entire period 1915-23.

Terrence Des Pres presents an analysis of precisely this kind of politically motivated scholarship in the United States in his article "On Governing Narratives: The Turkish-Armenian Case,"

The Yale Review

75 (1986): 517-31.

One result of this onslaught has been to divert the energies of a number of scholars. In 1986 Dadrian published "The Naim-Andonian Documents of the World War I Destruction of Ottoman Armenians and the Anatomy of a Genocide," *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 18 (August 1986): pp. 311-60, confirming

the authenticity of Talaat's orders, some of which I have quoted in chapter 2.

Turkkaya Ataov of Ankara University declared the Talaat documents to be forgeries, and a campaign is under way to convince Jewish scholars that there is no relationship between the Armenian and Jewish exterminations.

Countering this allegation as well, Dadrian published "The Role of Turkish Physicians in the World War I Genocide of Ottoman Armenians,"

Holocaust and Genocide Studies

1 (1986): 169-92. K. B. Bardakjian of the University of Michigan has written

Hitler and the Armenian Genocide

(Zoryan Institute, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1985),

confirming the authenticity of the Hitler quotation I have used at the end of this book

. Richard Hovannisian of the University of California at Los Angeles has on more than one occasion interrupted his magnum opus, a three-volume history of the postwar Armenian Republic, to document the nature of the denial itself—"The Critic's View: Beyond Revisionism,"

International Journal of Middle East Studies

9 (August 1978): 311-59, and "Genocide and Denial: The Armenian Case," in

Towards the Understanding and Prevention of Genocide: Proceedings of the International Conference,

ed. Israel W. Charney (Westview Press, Boulder and London, 1984). This article was originally presented at the 1982 International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide held in Tel Aviv. A compilation of the Armenian papers read at the Tel Aviv conference appears in

The Armenian Genocide in Perspective,

ed. Richard G. Hovannisian (Transaction, Inc.: New Brunswick, N.J., 1986).

Israel W. Charny, who was co-director and prime organizer of the conference, has given an account of Turkish pressures exerted on conference leaders and the State of Israel (Israel withdrew sponsorship as a result) because of the inclusion of Armenians. Titled "The Turks, Armenians and Jews," his account appears at the end of *Book One: The Conference Program and Crisis*, published by the Institute of the International Conference on the Holocaust and Genocide (Tel Aviv, 1983).

Finally, it is interesting to note the increased blatancy of the historical distortion in the entry on Smyrna in the latest (15th) edition of the *Encyclopedia Britannica* published in 1974. It reads: "In May 1919, Izmir was occupied by Greek forces. Heavily damaged in the fighting, it was recaptured by Turkish forces in September 1922." Authors of entries are not easy to locate in this new

Encyclopedia Britannica,

but persistence led me to Ahmet Temir, Director of the Turkish Cultural Center, Ankara, and Professor Sirri Erinc of the University of Istanbul, who was a co-author of the text in the 14th edition quoted earlier in this introduction.

A lack of acquaintance with the most reliable secondary sources and ways and means of proceeding to find them, led me at the outset to ask the advice of knowledgeable and respected experts (ultimately I approached many more, in a widening circle). I am especially grateful to the late Professor Basil Rauch of Barnard College, noted specialist in American history, and the late Thomas Peardon, Dean of the Faculty at Barnard and Professor of Political Science, without whose encouragement I might not have had the courage to proceed. My thanks, as well, to two colleagues who were the first to help guide my reading of the period directly pertinent to my project: Professor Rene Albrecht-Carrie of Barnard and Columbia and Professor Harry Psomiades now of Queens College. Dr. Stanley Kerr, who died several years ago, was busy with research for his book *The Lions of Marash* (State University of New York Press, 1973) while I was pursuing documents in the archives. I remember with pleasure our occasional meetings in the course of which we would exchange information. It was a decidedly unbalanced

exchange; Dr. Kerr had been in Marash as a young Near East Relief director during the postwar French occupation of the area, and tales of his experiences were exciting as well as informative. Professor James Gidney (now Emeritus) of Kent State University and author of *A Mandate for Armenia* (Kent State University Press, 1967) has long been helpful and encouraging. I of course am indebted now to the scholars who have thoughtfully helped keep me abreast of developments since the original publication of this book, among them Professor Vahakn Dadrian of the State University of New York at Geneseo; Professor J. K. Hassiotis of the University of Salonika; Dr. Paschalis Kitromilides of the Institute for Asia Minor Studies in Athens; Dr. Gerard Libaridian of the Zoryan Institute in Cambridge, Massachusetts; and Professor Richard Hovannisian of the University of California at Los Angeles. I owe a great deal to Professor Hovannisian, on whose expertise I have drawn more than once, and I am profoundly grateful to him for sending me a considerable list of relatively minor but inexcusable errors on the background material I had presented, with corrections. The errors had gone into the Harcourt Brace Jovanovich edition of this book, and were corrected in the British edition, as they are of course in this present one, which reprints the Faber and Faber text. Interpretations and any remaining errors or omissions are of course all mine.

In obtaining the addresses of the American sailors from the Bureau of Naval Personnel, I am indebted to the good offices of my late congressman, Bill Ryan, the likes of whom we see all too seldom in our legislative halls. And I should here like to acknowledge the letters I have received over the years from scores of readers who were either themselves eyewitnesses or closely related to those who were, to the burning of Smyrna. Their confirmation of my findings was more gratifying than I can say. A letter I especially treasure is from Mrs. H. C. Jacquith, the widow of the director of Near East Relief at Smyrna during the fire. Mrs. Jacquith was also generous enough to give me some priceless photographs her husband had taken during those desperate days. She herself had not been in Smyrna but had spent a lifetime hearing about it.

Above all I am profoundly grateful to those eyewitnesses who, either as survivors or as retired members of the United States Navy, offered me their memories, however painful, and their letters, diaries, and news clippings, when these were available. Without their help this account would obviously have been impossible. I should like to record here, as well, my debts to those entrusted with the papers deposited in the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress, the Naval Records Collection and the files of the Department of State at the National Archives. In all cases their assistance was gracious, efficient, and immeasurably helpful. I am grateful, too, to the staffs of the Historical Reference Library of the YMCA in New York City and the Houghton Library of Harvard University. My very special thanks go to Miss Nancy Horton for so kindly making her father's papers available to me.

To my present editor, John Hubbell, my warm appreciation for his patience and wise counsel. And indeed to the Kent State University Press and John Hubbell as its director for making this book available once again.

Marjorie Housepian Dobkin, Barnard College, Columbia University, N.Y., NY., USA

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FINAL CHAPTER

CHAPTER XXI

In the size of the lie, there is always contained a certain factor of credibility, since the great masses of the people will more easily fall victim to a great lie than to a small one.

ADOLF HITLER

Mein Kampf

For several years after the Smyrna debacle, American interests in Turkey conducted an intensive campaign to revise public opinion at home. This was no small task, for in the course of massive fund appeals the American Protestant leadership had created a certain amount of antipathy toward Turkey and sympathy for her minorities. Yet the Lausanne Treaty constituted a victory for Turkey on the question of the Christian population and a triumph of political and economic considerations for the West. Not the least of these was the matter of oil. According to Standard Oil Company historians, "there were many issues of importance at Lausanne but oil usurped the center of the stage".

In varying degrees every Western nation involved had to defend this order of priorities. But the greater the discrepancy between a nation's professed and actual motives, the greater its need to justify its policies. Political scientists might wave "morality" aside as irrelevant to the national interest. American historians might proclaim the triumph of American diplomacy; but spokesmen for America had been denouncing the ignominious motives of her rivals too loudly and for too long to let the nature of her triumph speak for itself. In 1924 the Near East desk at the State Department was still busily enlisting co-operative writers to its cause.

Although not technically a party to the treaty, the United States had sent three "observers" to Lausanne: Admiral Mark L. Bristol, Joseph C. Grew (he was later to be U.S. Ambassador to Japan until the attack on Pearl Harbor), and Richard Washburn Child, a magazine writer turned diplomat who, according to Harold Nicolson, was "typically American" in his conviction "that the whole Lausanne Conference was a plot on the part of the old diplomacy to deprive American company promoters of oil concessions". Child injected his advocacy of the "open door" into the proceedings with monotonous regularity. On one occasion, after an eloquent discourse of Curzon's, Child's remarks were so grossly irrelevant, as to cause the more seasoned diplomats to gape at each other, Nicolson records, "in bewildered embarrassment". With single-minded insight, Child attributed their reaction to guilt: "I could see that my statement had given discouragement and doubt to several secret plans around the Conference table."

The United States had publicly committed itself to upholding the Capitulations - in order

to protect its schools, religious institutions, and businessmen in Turkey - and to securing measures for the protection of minorities left in Constantinople. On these issues Ismet Pasha, once again his country's delegate, showed that he was prepared to conduct a siege that would outlast the limited patience of Western diplomats. Even Curzon's rapier-like wit was blunted, on occasion, against Ismet Pasha's impenetrable stubbornness on the question of Turkish sovereignty. But the British statesman won points for obstinacy too: When the first session broke up, Britain had obtained the freedom of the Straits - much to Soviet Russia's consternation.

On 7 April 1923, a few days before the conference was to resume, Angora dropped a bombshell with the announcement that it had granted Admiral Chester his coveted concessions. There was a shrill outcry from France, who for all her groundwork now found herself, along with Italy and Russia, with nothing much to show. Chester's exploitation rights covered the same area promised to France in Franklin-Bouillon's 1921 negotiations with Kemal. The nod to Chester was a transparent Turkish move to soften the United States position on the Capitulations, but the Department of State, oddly enough, was not especially pleased about Chester's triumph. The British, whose Turkish Petroleum Company's claims in Mosul were now ostensibly threatened, appeared singularly unconcerned.

While upholding the "open door" (translated "equal rights to all comers") and professing to support all American claims, including Chester's, the State Department was under the distinct impression that Chester had no chance at all. Behind the scenes, Secretary of State Hughes (a former Standard Oil Company executive who would return to his job after serving his country) had been working hard on behalf of the firm for several years. By the autumn of 1922 the British had begun to perceive that "it was better to give the Americans a share in the Turkish Petroleum Company than to run the risk of letting them loose to compete for concessions...."

In order to utilize State Department support for penetration into Mosul without risking criticism from rival companies, Standard Oil had reluctantly combined forces with such select American firms as Sinclair, Texas, and Gulf. "I believe it will be necessary to take some other interest with us, and a part of whom, at least, should be outside the subsidiaries," wrote Standard Oil director Sadler to Standard Oil president Teagle in September 1921. "I also think we should select the associates carefully and keep the list as small as possible." Under the circumstances none of the principals had to be concerned that such a joint corporate venture was in violation of the antitrust laws or that the "open door" was as tightly closed as they could wish.

Mesopotamia's oil-rich lands were all this time under British military occupation. In a canny move, the British had installed Feisal as ruler of the area in August 1921, when the French ousted him from Syria. With British encouragement, Feisal was now claiming this land - Iraq - as independent of Turkey. Curzon won another round at Lausanne when Turkey agreed to submit the dispute to the League of Nations.

It quickly became obvious that, minus Mosul, Chester's concessions would be as desirable as the turkey's neck; without the oil, and with the working population gone, a railroad network into the interior of Turkey was a far less appetizing investment. Searching avidly for capital, Chester was soon driven outside the United States. At this point the State Department, which had remained cool all along, announced sanctimoniously that it could no longer support him, since his chief backers were British. Chester's prospects thereafter went downhill. In time his more respectable backers split and his tactics assumed a desperate air; unsavoury promoters reared their heads, known gamblers came into the picture, there was at least one attempt at blackmail, and one of his agents was arrested in Anatolia as a British spy. In December 1923 Angora announced that because Chester had not exercised his option, his grant was cancelled by default.

Standard Oil and its invited participants, now allied with Britain's Turkish Petroleum, fared better. In 1924 the League of Nations gave Britain a formal mandate over Iraq, and in 1926 the country was awarded its independence over an area including Mosul, with the British to retain military bases in the country. Not long afterwards the terms of American participation in the oil venture were settled and there remained only the problem of what percentage the one individual shareholder - Calouste Gulbenkian - was to receive. The shrewd Armenian, who had originally brought the various interests together to form the Turkish Petroleum Company in return for a fifteen per cent share in the project, had never relinquished his personal claim despite manifold attempts to squeeze him out. In the end, he settled for five per cent of all the oil in Iraq.

To State Department contentions that the Iraqi scheme was not in violation of the "open door", Gulbenkian snorted "eye-wash". At the behest of American representatives, all references to oil claims were deleted from the final draft of the Lausanne Treaty.

In order to re-establish formal relations with Turkey, the State Department had to sell the treaty to Congress; but although inroads had been made on public opinion, a

segment of the public was putting up strong resistance to what it considered a sellout of the Christian minorities. Led by some eminent educators, Wilsonian diplomats, leaders of the Episcopal Church (it happened to have no missions in Turkey), and several southern and mid-western legislators - the Bible Belt having been so thoroughly sold on Armenians as Christian martyrs that it was not buying any other view - this faction also included relief workers, teachers, and virtually the entire staff of the American Collegiate Institute. At least one missionary had been fired. On his return from Smyrna, a week before the fire, S. Ralph Harlow of the International College faculty had given an interview to the *New York Times* in which he denounced American policy and predicted that it would lead to disaster for the minorities in Turkey. He continued to speak out after the Smyrna debacle. "They told me to shut up," he said later. "MacLachlan and Reed demanded my resignation and said that I «endangered the College». I resigned. I have been made to feel that I ought to keep still, but justice seemed to me greater than buildings and institutions." In a more recent interview, Dr. Harlow - now Professor Emeritus of Religion, Smith College - remembered this experience as the most disillusioning of his life. "The missionaries were a disgrace," he said.

Prominent leaders of the Near East Relief and the Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions took a very different view of the treaty. "We believe in America for the Americans, why not Turkey for the Turks?" George A. Plimpton (one of the charter members of the Armenian Atrocities Committee and later a director of the Near East Relief) asked rhetorically in 1923, after expressing his admiration to Turkey for trouncing the Greeks and dictating terms to the Allies. Plimpton expressed his concern that the loss of the Greeks (and presumably of the unmentioned Armenians) had "cost great suffering and involved great financial sacrifice to Turkey [in the sense that she had lost her merchants and major taxpayers]. Whether it was right or wrong is not for us to decide," added this trustee of Union Theological Seminary.

Having publicized these sentiments in a letter to the *New York Times*, Plimpton also printed them in *The Treaty With Turkey*,
an instructive compilation of "statements, resolutions, and reports in favour of the ratification of the Lausanne Treaty", brought out jointly by some significantly interested individuals, the foremost being members of the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions and the United States Chamber of Commerce. The burden of their combined effort was to praise Turkey, to dismiss and at the same time justify its actions against the minorities, and to demonstrate that if the Turks were in any way antagonized - as by rejection of the treaty - both American business and American philanthropy would suffer.

Such luminaries as Secretary Hughes, Herbert Hoover, Admiral Bristol, and Richard Washburn Child contributed to the volume. Playing to the current panic over an “international communist conspiracy”, Hughes declared that “Turkey is not endeavoring to undermine our institutions, to penetrate our labor organizations by pernicious propaganda, and to foment disorder and conspiracies against our domestic peace in the interest of a world revolution.” Secretary Barton of the Board of Missions, on the other hand, feared that Turkey might go communist. He argued that American schools in Turkey were now more necessary than ever, in order to make the Turks “look westward” rather than north. Bristol wrote that rejection of the treaty would “incur the ill will of Turkish officials and expose American institutions to unfavorable treatment”. Trade concessions, according to Herbert Hoover, would not be granted to U.S. nationals unless Congress signed the treaty. Child compared Kemal's revolution to George Washington's.

Missionary arguments were no less pointed. “Millions of dollars [in philanthropic investment] will be endangered, if not sacrificed, if the treaty is rejected,” wrote a representative of the National Council of Congregational Churches. Missionary doctors were being denied permission to practice in Turkey, he acknowledged, but “this permission will be granted as soon as the treaty is ratified”. Missionary leaders were gratified to note that henceforth their clients would be exclusively Moslem. There was no need to feel concerned about the Christians: “Every adult in Turkey is free to worship as he chooses -the Mohammedans in their mosques, the Christians, where there are any, in their churches.” As far as medical services were concerned, a missionary doctor observed that “There are no Christian patients applying. The Turks are beginning to realize that we are in Turkey primarily to serve the people.” Unless the treaty was ratified this incipient good will would be jeopardized.

Choosing to overlook the fact that it was the missionary leadership that had prevented President Wilson from declaring war on Turkey in 1917, the various writers harped on his failure as a lost chance: “The right time to express indignation at barbarities was in 1917 when we were at war with Turkey's associates. President Wilson restrained Congress from declaring war, and we thereby lost our chance to influence the peace settlement in our own right.” According to the General Secretary of the YMCA, excesses of the Turks had been “grossly exaggerated”. “To try to insert into the treaty a clause regarding the present minorities in Turkey would be very similar to foreign powers having insisted after our revolution on inserting a clause to the effect that we protect the American Indians living in the thirteen colonies,” he wrote, not doubting for a moment that such an idea was preposterous. Admiral Bristol, on the other hand, deemed it essential to have a clause “to protect corporations and individuals from the retroactive application of new and possibly excessive taxes”.

After a time the arguments became not only strained but absent-minded. All the fuss over Armenians was nonsense, one writer declared, because “it is a fact that there were no wholesale massacres against Armenians until they lent themselves to Russia’s schemes.” But another writer argued that the Allies owed no debt to the Armenians because “military services which were alleged as a ground of obligation toward the Turkish Armenians were performed almost entirely by the Armenians of Russia.” The volume ended on a reassuring note: “It’s no use to talk of atrocities; when it comes to atrocities all these people are all the same.” Historian Edward Mead Earle went one step further by surveying how dreadfully everyone had behaved toward everyone else throughout history.

This onslaught (representing newspapers and magazines ranging from *New Republic to Asia*

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met with an impassioned rebuttal in such journals as

The Literary Digest

and the

New York Times' Current History,

both of which maintained a stalwart neutrality by printing the two viewpoints side by side. The debate went on long after Congress had rejected the treaty and the Department of State had side-stepped the problem by negotiating a Treaty of Amity and Commerce with the Turkish government.

To prove its amity the United States gave up the Capitulations and allowed its institutions to fall under Turkish law, which required hiring Turkish nationals as teachers and forbade proselytizing. The Turks reciprocated by offering American archaeologists the same rights as Turkish archaeologists - of which there happened to be none.

Until 1927, when diplomatic relations with Turkey were fully restored, a flood of articles and books continued to review the Smyrna catastrophe. “The destruction of Smyrna by fire was the work of the Greeks,” wrote a Mr. Abdullah Hamdi in *Current History*. Hamdi, a resident of New York, cited a Turkish newspaper as his source of information.

George Horton presented his account in considerable detail, and at some cost to his career, in

The Blight of Asia.

“The torch was applied to that ill-fated city and it was all systematically burned by the soldiers of Mustafa Kemal.” Horton concluded, adding that the Allied and American warships “impotently watching” the Miltonic scene provided “the saddest and most significant feature of the whole picture”. In many quarters the book was considered “unbecoming”.

No one publication raised quite as much concern at the State Department as Edward Hale Bierstadt's *The Great Betrayal*. The author (he had been executive secretary of the emergency committee that pushed a special refugee bill through Congress after the fire) charged that the State Department's policy of "American economic imperialism" and Bristol's excessively restrictive orders had contributed to the Smyrna disaster. Even before its publication, in 1924, installments of Bierstadt's book appearing in *The Christian Herald*

provoked such a blast of angry letters to the Near East desk that Allen Dulles, unable to officially refute the charges head-on, was driven to seek personal testimonials. One zealous volunteer, a Mr. William T. Ellis, who identified himself as "a patriot and writer for

The Christian Herald",

had in fact to be restrained. "If it happened that Mr. Bierstadt's charges against the United States were true," Ellis had written in the draft of a rebuttal submitted to Dulles for approval, "we merit straightway the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah". Dulles thought Ellis should alter his tone and suggested some changes in phraseology, "so that it won't appear that American officials dumped the refugees on Greek territory".

Dulles leaned more heavily on the word of some of the relief officials present at the Smyrna proceedings. He urged them to write letters to editors, taking issue with Bierstadt's book. Mark Premiss, among others, was exceedingly helpful, but the Department's most valuable witness turned out to be Asa Jennings.

Jennings had already taken a large step forward in the international world when, on Admiral Bristol's recommendation, he was appointed a member of the International Commission on the exchange of Greek and Turkish prisoners. After Bierstadt's book was published, Jennings wrote the Secretary of State defending Bristol's "spirit of swift succor" at Smyrna and told the Department that it could make any use it wanted of his letter. A copy was promptly exclosed in the Department's reply to each disgruntled citizen who had written in.

In the course of time, and again at Bristol's suggestion, Jennings returned to Smyrna in charge of YMCA clubs - which he wanted to rename "Turkish-American clubs" since the word "Christian" had such offensive overtones. When the YMCA demurred, Jennings founded a new organization devoted to social service: "The American Friends of Turkey", financed by a Cincinnati clothing manufacturer known as Arthur "Golden Rule" Nash. During frequent lecture trips in the United States Jennings modestly dismissed his naval experience, and in subsequent presentations (in one instance by the aforementioned William Ellis) that story underwent a decided shift in tone. The Turks were scarcely mentioned, the Greek government had behaved rather cravenly about its

ships; there had been suffering, yes, but “*c 'est la guerre*”.

The epilogue of the Smyrna drama was played out in London at the High Court of Justice, during the first weeks of December 1924. The American Tobacco Company was bringing suit against the Guardian Assurance Company, Ltd. Maintaining that the fire was a result of “hostile and warlike operations”, the insurance company had invoked its exemption clause and refused to pay. The claim was for over \$600,000, and it was understood that the outcome of the trial would govern other claims totaling \$100,000,000.

A cast of familiar characters paraded to the witness stand before Mr. Justice Rowlatt. Spunky little Major Cherefeddin Bey described how he had been struck with a hand grenade as he led his cavalry regiment down the quay on 9 September two years before, but the Armenian culprit in his original story had now become “a uniformed, armed Greek soldier who threw the bomb”. Beyond this incident the Major had seen no disorder at Smyrna because, he said, “nothing took place”.

A Colonel Mouharren Bey admitted that feeling ran high against the Armenians because “we used to read reports in our newspapers of their behaviour, which led us to believe they were not friendly to us”. Yes, the army had distributed proclamations referring to “the injustice and cowardice of the Greeks, who nevertheless proved to be the most cruel enemy unlike any nation in the history of the human race”, but the Colonel swore that his troops were well disciplined and denied that his patrols had participated in any looting, rape or murder. “The patrols would never do such a thing”, he said.

The Colonel was recalled to the stand after a witness for the plaintiff unwittingly revealed that a cordon of Turkish soldiers had held the victims in the fire zone. “Did you want to prevent the people going anywhere?” asked Mr. A. T. Miller, representing the Guardian Assurance Company.

“Yes, we prevent them.”

“Going where?”

“We prevent them to be not escape from there only to stay there.” Mr. Justice Rowlatt thought this wasn’t much of a translation.

Miller tried again with another interpreter. “Why did you have the cordon on the quay? Did you want them burnt?”

“No, only to keep them by the boats.”

During his cross-examination of Mr. Chester Griswold (of Griswold and Brunswick, fig merchants), Mr. Miller again confirmed the presence of Turkish cordons around the city.

Did Mr. Griswold think it right that the people should thus be prevented from escaping the fire?

Mr. Griswold thought it was done for their own good. The roads leading from town were in bad neighbourhoods: “A good many bad characters live around there,” he said.

Did Mr. Griswold mean to say that the cordon was placed there by the Turks “to prevent the people from falling into bad hands?”

“I presume that,” said Mr. Griswold.

Griswold testified to having carried an American flag on his car, and to having placed American sailor guards at the bakeries - not to protect the bakers, who were Greek, but simply to keep them from selling bread. He had driven around town a good deal before and after the fire, in his capacity as secretary of the relief committee. The town was quiet and he had seen no violence.

Under cross-examination Griswold admitted that his Turkish business partner was the mayor of Smyrna and that he was also a friend and associate of a man named Archbell, a director of the American Tobacco Company - the plaintiff in the case.

Mr. Rene Guichet, chief engineer of the French railway company, with offices at the edge of the Armenian quarter, had seen nothing unusual before the fire except a little pillaging and heard nothing except a few “joy firings”; but he had to concede that there was essentially little difference in the sound of a gun being fired in joy or in anger. The Armenian population had not been molested so far as he knew because they were at first “closed in”, and later “they had left”. Again, he was forced to admit that it was not easy to tell the difference between people shut indoors and people absent, but he had an intuitive feeling of the way it had been.

Witnesses of every nationality, including an English business associate of the enterprising Mr. Archbell (this one in the garage and agricultural machinery business) supported the view that a single fire had spread accidentally, through the force of the wind.

Mr. Justice Rowlatt did not feel enlightened when the plaintiffs had rested their case. “This is one of the *vaguest* cases I've ever tried,” he complained.

“I’ m afraid it is very difficult, my lord,” Miller conceded.

“If this was a more civilized city,” mused the Judge, “one very probable explanation would be that somebody who was looting had got drunk. But as it is a semi-barbarous place the question of drink is not mentioned in the case.”

The haze began to clear as the defendant's witnesses took the stand. British naval officers offered their logs in evidence that while the wind was pleasantly brisk it was by no means stiff enough to fan the flames from the Collegiate Institute clear to the quay. Nurse Mabel Kalfa, the Reverend Charles Dobson, Major Maxwell of the Royal Marines, Sir Harry Lamb, members of the Smyrna fire department, and others were explicit about the origin and spreading of the flames and about the increase in violence as the days went on. A number of victims described their experiences. Among these was a lady who

had been raped, whose daughter had been assaulted, and whose father had been slain by Turkish soldiers. In a dramatic cross-examination Mr. Wright, representing the plaintiff, implied that she was masquerading under a false name, but was unable to prove his Allegation. He had no better luck in trying to shake the firemen's stories. "It must have struck you as a remarkable thing that the Turks were saying they were allowed to burn down Smyrna," he told fireman Katzaros.

"Why should it appear remarkable when I saw it myself?" "Did you mention it to your fellow workmen at the fire brigade afterwards?"

"If I mentioned that," said Katzaros, "they would have hanged me by the tongue."

During his summation Wright noted severely, "This is a charge against a nation," but he drew signs of amusement in the courtroom when he insisted that the Turks had "made every attempt to maintain order". By now thoroughly frustrated, the counsel for the plaintiff asked the Judge to admonish the opposition: "With great respect, my lord, the case here is serious, the evidence is flimsy, and it is not made the less flimsy by my learned friend ridiculing what I am saying!"

"No, no," said the Judge. "But I do not know that the other side, who will not be able to reply, are called upon not to laugh at what you said."

On Friday, 19 December, Mr. Justice Rowlatt delivered a considered judgment in favour of the defendant insurance company. The Judge, according to the *London Times*, entertained no doubt about the occurrences.

Neither the trial nor the verdict made much of an impact on the historical record, even in England. Not long afterwards a British publisher informed George Horton that *The Blight of Asia* could not be published there because "the British public was now so interested in the Mosul oil interests that they did not wish anything circulated that might offend the Turks". In a letter to Horton, Venizelos confirmed this opposition as "decisive".

Already the story of the Smyrna tragedy and its antecedents was being subjected to considerable revision. Among those influential in altering the historical verdict were the missionaries who had discredited their own eyewitness testimonies, and Arnold Toynbee, who after Lord Bryce's death in 1922 remained the foremost living authority on the question of Turkish minorities. After completing his editorship of Bryce's Blue Book on the treatment of Armenians, Toynbee had published a number of impassioned summaries to support his plea that the world remember these "unprecedented crimes" after the war and insure against their recurrence. Then, in 1921, he had briefly covered the Greco-Turkish war as a reporter for the then pro-Greek *Manchester Guardian*. Stationed with the Turkish Red Crescent he beheld Turks as the victims of violence inflicted by Greeks. He later referred to this experience as a turning point in his historical attitude.

(Arnold Toynbee to his son, Philip, in

A Dialogue Across a Generation:

"It was quite an influential thing in my life, seeing that war. I always try to see things from the unpopular point of view, the point of view that isn't represented. I think that's a very strong urge in me." Philip Toynbee: "Of course, it has been said that there's a certain perversity in this, and that in your anxiety to be fair you sometimes exaggerate the merits of the unpopular case." Arnold Toynbee: "I'm sure I do. Leaning over backwards.")

The popular point of view Toynbee had shared with American missionaries and British Liberals, had been replete with Christian condescension frequently bolstered by invective. ("I'd had the traditional sort of Gladstonian idea", Toynbee has said, "that the Turks were just a scandal which ought to be liquidated.") Now, in concluding that he had sinned, Toynbee in effect dismissed the content along with the tone of his treatises against the Turks. In the bibliography of his next book - *The Western Question in Greece and Turkey* -

he cited his previous writing as an example of the sort of prejudice for which he would henceforth atone.

By now convinced of the positive value of suffering and the negative nature of anger ("Anger I do feel is a sin - we're all angry with somebody sometimes, and when I find it in myself I am horrified ...") Toynbee proceeded to equate all forms of violence; specifically all manifestations of violence in Turkey as identical impulses in the course of "westernization". Despite his protest, in an article in the July 1923 issue of *Current History*, that he still believed in the truth of the evidence presented in the Blue Book, he went on to say that "Equally dark deeds have been inflicted by Greek soldiers .. during the war for Greek independence." This was the same man who had painstakingly refuted Turkish attempts to draw such a parallel. Since the Turkish Armenians were offering the Turks no provocation whatever, "the Turkish contentions fail from first to last", he had written.

Toynbee's *Western Question* was hot off the presses while Smyrna was in flames. The *New Statesman*, on 16 September 1922, was praising its author for his unbiased account of Turkish history and drawing from it the conclusion that the minorities deserved scant sympathy. Before long Toynbee expressed the opinion that although the truth about the burning of Smyrna could never be known, the Armenians shared the responsibility for it.

The destruction of Carthage and the great fires of Rome and London ring familiar echoes in the Western consciousness today, but the spectacular destruction of a great city a mere fifty years ago has been largely forgotten. Indeed the period 1914-22 in Turkey appears by now to have fallen into an historical abyss between the mountain of writings concerned with the end of the Ottoman Empire and the growing mound of books dealing with Kemal Ataturk's republic. In the midst of such historical indifference the Turks officially continue to maintain that the "alleged massacres" of Armenians in 1915 were merely the measures necessary to put down a revolt. The Greeks, they insist, set the torch to Smyrna in 1922.

The historical consensus as reflected in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica* appears to support this view. The 1970 edition refers to the city's destruction in terms of "war damage" inflicted during the Greek retreat. It emphasizes "atrocities against the Turkish population" during the Greek occupation in 1919. Taking their cue from Toynbee,* most British and American experts on modern Turkish history continue to overlook the shortcomings and to extol the virtues of Turkey's emergent nationalism under the Young Turks and Mustafa Kemal, whose title *Ataturk*, "Father of the Turks", was bestowed by his countrymen in recognition of his services. The liquidation of the minorities, when mentioned at all, is weighed as a fundamental advance toward homogeneity.

Not everyone is equally concerned about the historical record, but at least one student of history compared the parade of events in Turkey with their subsequent dismissal and acted on a cynical conclusion. "Who, after all, speaks today of the annihilation of the Armenians," Hitler declared as he announced his own plans for genocide to his Supreme Commanders on 22 August 1939. "The world believes in success alone."

The survivors of the Smyrna fire have the advantage of a more profound insight. Those interviewed did not fail to emphasize that in the midst of a holocaust provoked by hatred and abetted by greed, each owed his or her life to an act of compassion and courage. In

so doing they acknowledged the ambiguities which others reject in an age that both tempts and defies easy solutions.

The course of history since 1922 suggests that the ultimate victims may be those who delude themselves.

*** Curiously enough, specialists in virtually every other historical area have criticized Toynbee's distortion of crucial particulars in their respective fields.**

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